



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**HEALTHY PERSONS ASKED TO HELP CONSERVE FLU VACCINE
FOR HIGH-RISK GROUPS**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is asking for the public's help to conserve the limited supply of influenza (flu) vaccine for those who need it most. DOH is urging doctors to target the remaining vaccine for high-risk groups, those most likely to have serious complications from the flu.

"Influenza can be a life threatening illness to vulnerable populations such as the elderly, the very young and those with underlying medical conditions," said Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D., Director of the Hawaii State Department of Health. "We are asking healthy individuals - those with a low risk of developing serious complications from the flu - to not get their shot this year, so vaccine is available to help protect the most vulnerable members of our community."

The high risk groups who should get a flu shot this year include:

- all children aged 6–23 months;
- adults aged 65 years and older;
- persons aged 2–64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions;
- all women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- children aged 6 months–18 years on chronic aspirin therapy;

(more)

- health-care workers involved in direct patient care; and
- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 6 months.

“While there may not be a flu shot available for every individual who wants one this year, there are still things the public can do to protect themselves and their families,” said Dr. Paul Effler, Chief of the Disease Outbreak Control Division.

Recommendations include:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Washing your hands.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Touching something contaminated with germs (doorknob, phone or faucet) and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth can spread infection.

The limited flu vaccine supply is due to production problems at Chiron Corp., the world's second-leading flu vaccine supplier, that resulted in the British government suspending their manufacturing license earlier this week. This action reduced, by approximately half, the expected 100 million doses of flu vaccine available in the U.S. for the 2004-2005 influenza season.

For additional information on flu and the availability flu vaccine, call 2-1-1 or visit www.vaxhawaii.com.

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